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University of Dayton

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# News

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WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 21, 2020

# Propel Dayton: UD's new program for entrepreneurs designed to move start-ups forward

With a generous gift from an anonymous donor, the University of Dayton Office of Technology and Entrepreneurial Partnerships has launched Propel Dayton, a program designed to support prospective entrepreneurs in starting a new business around a technology developed at UD.

Propel Dayton was created in response to UD President Eric F. Spina's inaugural speech calling for the creation of "innovative policies, practices and incentives" to advance entrepreneurship within the University. While the program was created primarily to support UD faculty and staff in commercializing their technologies, Propel Dayton also will work with promising entrepreneurs in the Dayton region interested in bringing technologies developed by the University to market.

"Innovative tech start-ups are important to economic development," said Mathew Willenbrink, director of technology and entrepreneurial partnerships at UD. "Much of Dayton's economy was based on entrepreneurship historically, and our goal is to provide opportunities and resources for local entrepreneurs to build on that legacy and create new businesses from locally grown technologies. It's good for them and it's good for the region."

University leaders hope the program will tap UD's rich portfolio of technology and intellectual property developed by the University of Dayton Research Institute and other research efforts. Through conducting more than \$2 billion in sponsored research in areas such as corrosion protection, nanotechnology, materials, green technology and image analysis, UD has developed a number of promising cutting-edge technologies with commercial potential.

More information about UD technologies and patents available for license can be found [here](#).

Propel Dayton will provide those who enter the program with a variety of resources, from advice in developing a business plan to connections with seasoned entrepreneurs. The program consists of three phases, the first of which involves exploring commercial opportunities with new entrepreneurs and outlining the resources available to them. Interested candidates are then sent through a pre-accelerator program before the final stage, when new companies are launched.

"We'll also provide an in-depth outline of what is involved in starting a new business and help them decide whether it's something they really want to pursue," Willenbrink said.

Willenbrink said an anonymous gift designated to support start-up companies based on technology developed at the University is allowing Propel Dayton to get started.

"We're looking at this as a soft roll-out, but we'll still be able to provide a number of services to fledgling entrepreneurs, such as education, guidance and networking opportunities," he said. "We look forward to taking Propel Dayton to its fullest potential when we're on the other side of the pandemic. At that time we will have more resources and opportunities, which will allow us to take the program even further."

Willenbrink added there are plans to eventually hold "pitch events," a University version of *Shark Tank*.

"Successful ventures that started on our very own campus have yielded economic benefits to the founders and community and provided significant educational opportunities for our students," Willenbrink said. "This program will provide a means for an even greater number of University of Dayton and city of Dayton entrepreneurs to enjoy similar successes."

To learn more about Propel Dayton, contact Willenbrink at [mwillenbrink1@udayton.edu](mailto:mwillenbrink1@udayton.edu) or [visit Propel Dayton's](#)

website.

For interviews, contact Shawn Robinson, associate director of news and communications, at [srobinson1@udayton.edu](mailto:srobinson1@udayton.edu).

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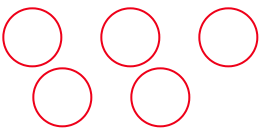
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